

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 451

By Eldridge

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize the men and women of Youth Challenge for all they have done to improve the lives of West Tennessee's young people.

WHEREAS, the Honorable Judge Christy Little set out a vision to provide innovative services to at-risk youth across West Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the following people met to discuss the provision of services to at-risk youth of West Tennessee and develop the Youth Challenge program: the Honorable Judge Christy Little; Dr. Vicki Lake, Director of Business Development of West Tennessee Healthcare and grant writer for all Youth Challenge grants; Sheriff David Wolfork of Madison County; Chief Rick Staples of Jackson; Nick Pappas of Youth Town of Tennessee, Incorporated; Pepper Pratt of Youth Town of Tennessee, Incorporated; Sean Jones, representative of Pathways; Dr. Barbara Dooley, acting Director of Madison County Juvenile Court Services; and representatives of the Jackson-Madison County School System; and

WHEREAS, a collaborative was formed between General Sessions Court Division II, the Honorable Judge Christy Little, West Tennessee Healthcare, Director George Hattaway and the Department of Children's Services, and Youth Town of Tennessee, Incorporated, to design and implement the Youth Challenge program at Youth Town; and

WHEREAS, the first class graduated on September 8, 2000, to a large reception of family, friends, and media; and

WHEREAS, the Youth Challenge program is funded by a JABG grant from the Federal government and supplemented by Madison County to continue the services provided to these at-risk children; and

WHEREAS, the goals of Youth Challenge are instilled through the curriculum of the leadership model of the program and based on five core values of improving mind, body, spirit, discipline, and service and a code of ethics that states, "We will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do. We will be responsible and accountable for all our actions and respectful to others. We will demonstrate pride, loyalty, and honor in all that we do"; and

WHEREAS, dedicated staff, volunteers, and board members have worked tireless hours to see that the needs of each child are met and that they are given every opportunity to succeed in all future endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Youth Challenge is a very physically intensive, prevention-based program for males aged twelve to seventeen with a minimum of eight weeks of residential treatment focusing on anger management, coping skills, education, alcohol and drug addictions, and gang prevention. This period is followed by a very structured six-month aftercare program designed to follow up, enforce learned behaviors, and encourage future success; and

WHEREAS, Youth Challenge is a model for the State of Tennessee and has been proven effective each year. Although the goal is prevention before detention, Youth Challenge staff and supporters feel if one child is saved, it was worth the effort, time, and money; and

WHEREAS, the Youth Challenge program at Youth Town has an 87 percent success rate, measured over its nine years of existence; and

WHEREAS, the Youth Challenge program at Youth Town has provided services to over 500 youth across West Tennessee, providing an alternative to state custody care and, therefore, saving millions of taxpayer dollars; and

WHEREAS, the Youth Challenge program at Youth Town is now 500 strong and growing; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and recognize the men and women of Youth Challenge for all they have done to improve the lives of West Tennessee's young people and extend to them our best wishes for much continued success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.